Film scholars are today well aware of cinema’s multiple connections to the so-called “natural” world. From the very beginning, the medium’s technical affordances allowed it to draw attention to the hitherto unseen aspects of our environments, showing us in close-up and time lapse the minutiae of animal and plant life – what Siegfried Kracauer famously called the “reality of another dimension” (1997). More fundamentally, cinema’s longstanding dependence on a congeries of natural resources – silver, petroleum, gelatine – and the effects on screen of its inescapable “hydrocarbon imagination” (Bozak 2011), situate it both with and against the world it depicts.

Given cinema’s unique representational capacities, over the last century the same environments have afforded cinema a collection of vastly different images. The sea, for instance, has gifted us the pioneering representations of underwater fauna in the films of Jean Painlevé; the ethical compromises of Jacques Cousteau and Louis Malle’s Palme d’Or winning Le Monde du Silence (1955); and the disorienting GoPro footage of marine life in Leviathan (Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Véréna Paravel, 2012).

If nature has long presented a challenge, a resource, and a backdrop to filmmakers of all stripes, then film studies scholarship is only beginning to reckon with its sheer multiplicity as reflected in film history. The last decade especially has witnessed a flourishing of writing with an ecological bent, and has seen the rise of the field now known as ‘ecocinema.’ A number of collections (Willoquet-Maricondi 2010; Rust, Monani and Cubitt 2013) saw the coming together of ecocriticism and film studies over a decade ago, but scholars including Adrian Ivakhiv (2013); Kristi McKim (2013), Adam O’Brien (2016; 2017) and Jennifer Fay (2018) have since made exciting advances in other directions.

There is indeed already a vast proliferation of approaches to cinema in connection with nature, but recent developments – such as attention to the implications for particular national cinemas (Past 2019) – suggest that ecocinema as a field still holds many unexplored possibilities. As such, the 20th issue of Comparative Cinema is capacious in its focus, inviting contributors to consider novel ways of addressing cinema in connection with all manner of non-human environments and perspectives. Articles should employ a comparative methodology, and topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Cinema’s Natural Resources: Given the provenance of film materials like celluloid, and the massive carbon footprint of streaming technology, how heavy is the burden of cinema on the scarce natural resources of the world today? How might cinema’s materials – and its waste – emerge in film aesthetics and narratives?

- More-than-human Perspectives: To what extent can cinema de-centre our habituated ways of seeing the world on screen? How close can the camera, as what André Bazin called the “non-living agent,”
take us to the non-anthropocentric possibilities of vision?

- Cinema and the Elemental: What role do the traditional elements – earth, air, water, fire – have to play in the images we see on our screens? How might the concept of “elemental media” (Peters 2015) or the notion of cinema’s “elemental imagination” (De Roo 2019) be deployed in comparative analyses of particular films, or of cinema and its environments? How are spectacular natural phenomena like storms, floods and fires represented on film?

- Extraction of Materials and Meaning: How has cinema represented the perils of extractive capitalism on screen? Or, considering the work of scholars like Leo Goldsmith (2018) and Daniel Mann (2022), how has the medium itself knowingly participated in this dynamic of extraction in its bid to draw meaning from the world? What are the gendered and colonial dimensions of environmental extraction in cinema’s history?

Comparative Cinema invites the submission of complete articles addressing ecocinema from a comparative perspective, which must be between 5500 and 7000 words long, including footnotes. Articles (in MS Word) and any accompanying images must be sent through the RACO platform, available on the journal website.

In addition to articles that respond to this particular topic, Comparative Cinema is also accepting submissions for ‘Rear Window,’ a miscellaneous section of the journal that will include articles focusing on other aspects of cinema using a comparative methodology. Please indicate in your submission if you wish to be considered for this section of the journal.

Timeline for Issue 20:

**Deadline for submission of complete articles: 15/1/2023**

**Peer review: 15/1/2023-28/2/2023**

**Final copy deadline: 30/4/2023**

**Publication: June 2023**

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